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# SLAVERY

EXAMINED BY THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

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## SERMON

*Preached by Rev. Geo. W. Bassett,*

AT THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D. C.,

**Sunday, February 23, 1858.**

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WASHINGTON, March 6, 1858.

REV. GEO. W. BASSETT,

*Paster Congregational Church, Washington, D. C.—*

DEAR SIR: Will you be kind enough to furnish for publication a copy of the Sermon which you preached in the Congregational church on Sunday, the 28th ult., on the subject of Slavery.

Respectfully, &c.,

WM. H. SEWARD,

H. HAMLIN,

CHARLES DURKEE,

H. WILSON,

P. BLISS,

J. R. GIDDINGS,

JOHN A. BINGHAM,

OWEN LOVEJOY.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 9, 1858.

GENTLEMEN: Deeply sensible of the honor implied in your request, I hereby comply, hoping that my humble effort, thus endorsed, may contribute towards awakening a more effective sympathy in behalf of a persecuted and afflicted people.

Very respectfully, yours,

GEO. W. BASSETT.

To Hons. Wm. H. Seward, P. Bliss, H. Hamlin, John A.

Bingham, Charles Durkee, J. R. Giddings, H.

Wilson, Owen Lovejoy.

# SERMON.

*Romans, 2, 15 : WHICH SHOW THE WORK OF THE LAW WRITTEN IN THEIR HEARTS.*

The real issue in the great controversy which now convulses this nation is in regard to the moral character of negro slavery. It is said to have become a question of the liberties of the whites. I grant that the liberties of the whites are involved; but the real question lies back of this; for it is a serious consideration that you can enslave the negro only by restricting the liberties of the whites. This truth is written in living facts all over the nation. The acts of our National Legislature for the last quarter of a century are a mortifying demonstration of the same truth.

Let me warn my countrymen, also, that there is a Providential view of this subject. God Almighty is for the negro. He is troubling this nation to-day because of her immeasurable crimes against this class of her population. All others may ignore the wrongs of this afflicted people, but there is an ear above, ever open to their ceaseless cry. It is all vain trifling, therefore, to contend against these natural and retributive effects of slavery, while you leave the mighty cause in full operation. The liberties of the blacks must be restored, or that of the whites will be destroyed. Twenty millions of republicans, who hold four millions of slaves, are too selfish to maintain their own liberties! They deserve to lose the "habeas corpus," the "trial by jury," and legal freedom to obey God. They deserve ignoble subjection to a one-man-power, like the enthralled millions of France and Italy. The Fugitive Slave Law, a subjected pulpit, a corrupted church, and a profligate and murderous age, are but the retributive effects of our selfishness towards a persecuted race. The chariot wheels of our nation's prosperity are coming off; we are deep in the mir of the Red Sea, while the floods of national calamity are impending over us.

Slaveholding politicians exhibit a creditable frankness in declaring that this question lies at the bottom of all our national difficulties. Nor is the controversy limited to this continent. It seems as though the scattered forces of slavery, by a fearful concert of action, suddenly emerging from the coverts to which they had retreated, were about to make a simultaneous and universal effort to recover their lost dominion.

A leading organ of the French Government boldly defends the policy of purchasing negroes on the coast of Africa, and carrying them as slaves to the French Antilles. The London Times, also, has recently advanced some strange and startling views of a similar import. It is well known that the combined fleet of Christendom does not succeed in preventing the inhuman traffic in African slaves. The horrors of the middle passage are not the dark cruelties of a semi-barbarous antiquity, but the hell-

ish perpetrations of this generation. Such facts, together with the recent action of the highest court in America, (except the American people,) in which is recognised the right of property in man, and in which the political existence of a whole race is annihilated, all unite to press the subject upon our consideration.

A quarter of a century since, when the unsophisticated mind of the nation was first roused to this subject, the question of the moral character of slavery was recognised as the essential point. Few could be found at that time to defend the theory of slavery. Legislatures and courts protected the institution by a sort of tolerated inconsistency; and on the principles of human expediency. The testimony of the most illustrious fathers of the Republic, North and South, was nearly unanimous against the morality of this institution. They uniformly deprecated its existence.

But a fearful change has come over the American people. By twenty or thirty years of national toleration of acknowledged wrong, the moral sense of the people has become so blunted, and the heart of the nation so hardened, that this legislative monster of human chattelism is not only defended in senates but justified in churches. The pulpit, the sworn advocate and guardian of right, has boldly stepped forward, Bible in hand, to defend its moral rectitude. Slavery no longer modestly seeks to protract a hated existence for a brief period, that it may secure an easy death, but boldly claims political fraternity, and demands immortalization with the most approved and beneficent principles of republicanism, and the most refined institutions of domestic life. By a masterly generalship it has thrown its antagonist upon the defensive, and now wages an aggressive war upon liberty. The question now seems to be, not Shall slavery die? but Shall liberty live? I look upon this state of things as the retributive, natural effect of that faithless ignoring of the subject by the prominent American pulpits and statesmen for the last few years. If the pulpit could innocently be silent on this evil, it could with as much honesty and more consistency justify it. If legislatures could justly protect it, why not extend it? There is a bold consistency in this modern position of slaveholders which awakens a sort of painful admiration.

It will be my aim to be as frank and consistent in opposition to slavery as its advocates are in its defence.

Dr. Ross, a prominent representative of slaveholding christianity, says in a letter to the Rev. Albert Barnes, that he agrees with Mr. Barnes in the affirmation that "the present is eminently a time when the views of every man

on the subject of slavery should be uttered in unambiguous tones."

There is a servile timidity upon this subject in the pulpits of the non-slaveholding States which is anything but creditable to preacher or hearer. I look upon the suppression of the truth upon this subject as a marked insult to an audience. It implies that the people are too stupid to understand or too dishonest to bear the truth. I am unwilling thus to impeach the intelligence or moral integrity of my hearers.

I wish on this occasion to arrest attention from all secondary and collateral issues, and to discuss the main point in the controversy—Is slavery a sin?

The modern advocates of slavery have met this issue manfully. The distinguished Calhoun, who lived a generation in advance of his age, may be looked upon as the founder of a peculiar school upon this subject. A considerable class of politicians and preachers have followed the example and teachings of that remarkable man.

Let the advocates of liberty be as consistent and bold as those of slavery, and we may look for some termination of the controversy.

I do not purpose to take the time to discuss on this occasion the Bible argument upon the subject. I gladly accept the issue, but I choose my own weapons. I wish to call slavery out from its hiding places amidst the types and shadows of Jewish institutions and the ambiguities of a semi-barbarous antiquity, and expose its real character in the pure light of nature. I propose to test it by a revelation older than the Scriptures, the Divine authenticity of which was never questioned and never will be. I propose to apply to it the law of God as inscribed upon the constitution of man at his creation, and immutably stereotyped in every successive generation, "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts." I shall hope to show that slavery is in eternal conflict with nature. If this can be done it will devolve on the Bible defenders of slavery to vindicate that venerated book from the charge of collision with nature. Two or three axioms will prepare us for the argument.

1. God's will is law, and equally authoritative however made known.

2. A natural truth cannot be invalidated by a supposed revelation. Natural truth is eternal truth. All collisions with it are self-destructive. If, therefore, slavery is condemned by nature, then if you could prove that the Bible sanctions it you would not justify slavery, you would only condemn the Bible.

3. The will of the Creator in reference to the destiny of his works is determined by their constitutional adaptations. These are their natural laws.

Let us now apply this test of God's will to the most glorious of his creations on earth. Let us see if in creating man God made him for slavery or liberty. This will settle the question in plain English, without either Greek or Hebrew.

By slavery understand the property principle. This is expressed with peculiar force and thoroughness in the enactments of all the

slave States. It is the right to hold and use, to buy and sell, without restriction. Say that families shall not be separated, and you change slavery to serfdom; and, bad as serfdom is, it is not slavery. Slavery can tolerate no such restrictions of the right of property.

In studying the Divine will in man, remember also that he is endowed with intellectual and moral powers and susceptibilities as well as physical. God stamped upon him a far higher destiny than to eat, labor, and die.

The first law of the human constitution to which I would advert, is its tendency to develop itself. It is the result of the instinctive desires of our common humanity. From the dawn of existence these primary tendencies prompt a man to aim at his legitimate destiny. God implanted these native desires, and created their corresponding objects, designing the one for the other; and to defeat this design is evidently to violate the law of God as inscribed on the constitution of man. Now, it cannot be disputed that slavery lays the iron hand of compulsion upon the whole nature of man, and precludes its appropriate development. While the Voice of Divinity within is continually prompting man to develop his nature and accomplish his destiny, Slavery stands over him with the rod of power, suppressing every response and paralyzing every effort. The whole universe calls upon man to worship and obey his Creator: Slavery lifts her hand and says, Obey your master! God, from heaven, exclaims to man, Ye are mine! Slavery replies, He is mine! A voice from the deepest soul is heard, still urging man to cultivate that immortal nature which constitutes his true glory, and for which alone his physical nature exists. But the jealous ear of slavery catches the first whisper of humanity, condemns the soul to perpetual silence, and drowns it to utter disappointment.

Thus does slavery, not content with chaining the limbs and wearing the flesh, lay its rude hand upon the finer texture of the soul, and endeavor to efface forever the bright image of its Creator. This feature alone of slavery is its eternal condemnation.

But to be more specific, I remark—

1. The law of free agency is utterly violated by slavery. This law results from the existence of the faculty of will. For what did God endow man with a free will, unless he designed him to act freely? Would a benevolent Creator torment a creature with the possession of so glorious a faculty as an intelligent will, doomed to perpetual slavery and disappointment? It is incredible. But slavery reduces a man from the state of an intelligent and responsible agent to a mere thing. Thus is annihilated the noble attribute of free agency, that which alone renders man capable of moral subjection to his God.

Now, will it be denied that to rob man of his free agency, and thus sever the tie of moral obligation that binds him to his God, is a violation of the law of God as inscribed upon his constitution?

2. As the effect of this faculty of will, there

springs up in the human breast an unconquerable desire of liberty. This law is written in blood and tears all over the world's sad history. It has been the natural antagonist of human selfishness in all ages. It has created more heroes than all other causes. It has ever been the inspiration of poetry, the soul of oratory, and the mother of patriotism. All that was beautiful and immortal in the sages of the past sprang from this law of liberty. Few men will so dishonor the race to which they belong as to deny the existence, dignity, and sanctity of this law. It expresses in no doubtful terms the will of the Creator.

But here again slavery is in direct conflict with the God of nature. In violation of the teachings of universal history, in disregard of the unanimous rebukes of patriotism in all ages, and in contempt of the august presence of nature herself, slavery tramples upon this law. Nay, it leaves no means untried to efface from the constitution of its victim the last vestige of this noble feature of the Divine image! Is such sacrilege no sin? When you have succeeded by violence in extinguishing this love of liberty and making man a *contented slave*, will you claim it as a triumph of virtue?

3. The desire of knowledge, or the tendency of the intellectual powers to develop themselves, is a manifest law of the human constitution. The creation of a faculty implies a command of nature to use that faculty according to its adaptations. The powers of the human mind, therefore, imply a command of God to develop and use those powers according to their capabilities. The whole material and spiritual universe presents a continual challenge to the soul to develop its powers of investigation, awakening an inextinguishable and elevating thirst for knowledge. Can any one doubt the appropriate destiny of the human intellect? Is not the will of the Creator written legibly upon it? and can it be right for man to thwart that will by forcibly dwarfing the intellect, by putting out the mind's eye and reducing the soul as near to a blank as his own selfishness will permit? Can that system which makes the acquisition of knowledge a crime, be in harmony with the Divine will? This feature alone demonstrates the rebellious character of slavery. All nature is the inspirer of the intellect—slavery alone is its extinguisher.

4. Slavery violates the law of the domestic affections. There are the conjugal, the parental, and the filial affections, which are imbedded deep in the constitution of man, and from which originate the most sacred obligations of social life. They are among the richest of Heaven's blessings to a selfish and distracted world. From them flow the most tender emotions and sacred joys that bless the condition and relieve the woes of man. They are the last earthly resource of human sorrow. Driven from this sanctuary of rest, the distracted spirit has no relief but in death. One would think that selfishness and violence, when it approached this department of human nature, would forbear its ravages. Having robbed its

victim of wealth, of knowledge, and of personal liberty, one would think that even devils would spare to a man the wife of his bosom and the child of his love. But not so with slavery. It hesitates not to fasten its iron grasp upon the tenderest chords of domestic affection. No circle of joys is too sacred for its fatal inroads. No obligations are too strong to be sundered, and no appeals too affecting to be disregarded by this fell spirit. It riots upon the sorrows of the poor. This is no fiction of the imagination, but the cruel story of American slavery. Everybody knows that it is not a fiction, but a heart-breaking reality, that in our own country, earned with life and redeemed with blood, wife is torn from husband, child from parent, and sister from brother—and this, is but the beginning of sorrow and infamy! Now, I ask if here is not slavery against God? Who waked the domestic affections in the breast of man? Who gave them their sacred and piercing cry? Who inscribed those eternal laws upon the human constitution? Every man knows that they were written by the finger of God, and that the authority of Sinai was not more binding than those sacred mandates that issue from the domestic nature of man. The conclusion is inevitable. Slavery is a violation of the Divine law of the domestic affections.

The sentiment that the Creator sanctions a system whose existence depends on the legal right to tear asunder the holiest ties of conjugal and parental love, is a monster of blasphemy. It impiously charges the holy God with that extreme of depravity which himself has described as "without natural affection."

Fellow man, is there no inviolable sacredness in the tie which binds you to the wife of your choice? Go tell her so: and if she ever squanders another affection upon your unrepenting spirit, she is guilty of treason against her sex.

Before you sanction such an outrage, go wrest your own darling from its mother's arms and dash it against the wall—or worse, sell it for gold! Nay, tear out the quivering flesh of your own heart, and give it to its legitimate possessors, the beasts of prey, and then stride the earth a heartless monster! But while you claim the sensibilities of a man—while you profess the honor of a husband's devotion and the magnanimity of a father's tenderness, never lend your sanction to a barbarous repeal of all domestic law!

5. There is another law of human nature peculiar to the female sex, the wanton violation of which ought forever to damn the system of slavery from civilization and decent society. I refer to that innate law of the female mind which revolts from prostitution. This sacred instinct, which seems like the last virtue of Eden—an element of social refinement so ethereal as to survive the wreck of the fall—has ever been the guardian angel of domestic virtue and the true source of elevated happiness. But it seems as though what had escaped the malice of hell in the garden of Eden, had become the helpless prey of the more gross and malignant selfishness of slavery! Under the

power of this ravenous monster, the flood-gates of licentiousness have been opened upon the entire female sex. Hear it, ye Americans, Senators and high functionaries of this Government, *a doom to slavery is a doom to resistless prostitution!* Tell me, I say! shall an American citizen, when he becomes a politician, *cease to be a man?* Where, then, is the manhood and generosity of American statesmen, that more than fifteen hundred thousand American females are subject to the lawless will of a master? Hark! what tones of woe are those that strike my ear? It is the ceaseless wail of two millions of our countrywomen in slavery. Shut your ears to the clanking chains of the stronger sex—steel your hearts to the scenes of blood and cruelty through which they are passing; nature will soon relieve them by death, and I trust compensate their trials by a better life; but quench not the generous impulses of pity for abused and suffering woman. The old Roman breast, with all its savage ferocity, was incapable of such neglect of the wrongs of woman. That iron-hearted people indignantly hurled a monarch from his throne, in vindication of the rights of one defenceless female. And shall the “unnumbered woes” of two millions of American women in slavery be neglected in a country called christian, and by a people called republican?

Can there be a rational doubt that slavery is a violation of the law of God as inscribed upon the peculiar constitution of woman? Who is willing to deny to his mother, his sister, his wife, or daughter, this Divine instinct? Yet slavery tramples ruthlessly upon it. All the nobler impulses of humanity, all the finer sentiments of the soul, revolt at this unparalleled outrage upon female helplessness. Every sacred principle of our constitution is in eternal antagonism with it. Yet as man is, it is inseparable from the property principle—it is the general effect of slavery.

In the discussions upon our Mormon difficulties, I hear allusions to the polygamy of that degraded class of American citizens. I hear of the licentiousness of the commercial metropolis of our country; and of the degrading sensuality of the Turkish seraglio; but I hear not a word of that most objectionable and cruel form of polygamy on earth, existing under the institution of slavery—and that sanctioned by the model Republic. How any gentleman—how any husband—how any father or brother, can justify or tolerate slavery, it is difficult to conceive.

It is not only to my mind unanswerably clear that slavery is a sin, *always and everywhere*, but that this should be questioned is the most astonishing and incredible phenomenon of the age. I can account for it only from the blinding influence of the tolerated crime of ages. God in judgment has “sent strong delusion,” that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” This seems like the terrible doom of our country. While the national mind is enlightened, the national heart seems to grow corrupt; for priest

and people, statesmen and private citizens, have held the truth in unrighteousness.

As a nation, we have acknowledged the right and done the wrong. Having practically repudiated liberty, we are being subjected to despotism.

Is it not manifest that slavery an aggravated violation of the will of God as indicated in the creation of man, the noblest of his works. In other words, is NOT SLAVERY A SIN?

In order to invalidate the above argument in reference to the negro, you must prove that he is not a free agent, that he has no constitutional desire of liberty or knowledge, that the negro husband does not love his wife, nor the mother her child; that they spontaneously seek a condition of slavery as their legitimate destiny, and that slavery is naturally promotive of the well-being of the parties concerned.

I suppose no intelligent person will endorse that series of propositions. I conclude then that the argument is conclusive against American slavery. I believe it can be answered only by effacing from the human constitution the natural laws of its Eternal Creator.

I. I infer from this subject that slavery can never be right.

It is proved to be wrong by the eternal and immutable nature of things. Hence it must be eternally and immutably wrong. No combination or peculiarity of circumstances can alter the nature of things. Hence no circumstances can make slavery anything but a violation of natural law. It is therefore intrinsically and unchangeably wrong.

2. We infer that enactments which sustain slavery can impose no obligation of obedience. Human enactments are mere expressions of human will. These expressions of human will cannot change the eternal nature of things. They cannot make that right which, by the natural constitution of things, is wholly wrong. An act of rebellion cannot repeal God's eternal laws. Human enactments, then, can never make it right to commit a crime.

Do you ask what one should do in the case of a collision of duty and law? I say be free. Obey the higher law. Never be brought into the servitude of a finite will. Let your *life* go, but not your *integrity* and your *manhood*.

3. I infer that all compromises with slavery are sinful and delusive. Slavery possesses an eternal and unalterable moral character. It is a crime. It always was and always will be a crime, and we must make no compromise with crime. Crime is not the legitimate subject of compromise. You may compromise interests, but not crime.

Compromise implies mutual concessions. But what may I concede to crime but destruction? Men speak of the “rights of slavery.” It has no rights—it is made up of wrongs unrelieved by one ray of justice. I may give up my property for the sake of peace, and thus compromise a difficulty. It may be wise to do so. But I may not rob my neighbor to get the means of purchasing peace and quiet. I may never sacrifice another's rights for my own interest. It constitutes the essence of all crime.

Besides, compromises with crime are always

delusive. They never bring peace. What are called the compromises of the American Constitution are fast working our ruin. Every subsequent compromise has been an advance in the downward tendency of our Government. The compromises of 1850 were beyond any thing ever dreamed of by the fathers of the Republic. The fugitive slave law was the shame of the age, much more of the country. I am glad to hear Southern politicians repudiate compromise. Let all questions be tested and decided by their merits. Let it be remembered we may compromise our interests, but right, never. The only proper relation we can sustain to wrong is aggressive, unceasing antagonism. I trust all parties have enough of compromise upon the stupendous crime of slavery. Henceforth let the watchword be "victory or death."

4. Nor can we properly tolerate slavery. We may endure the effects of crime; but to tolerate it is to commit it. May we tolerate murder? We may submit to it, but toleration implies a voluntary and criminal consent. No matter what the inducements of self-interest or expediency may be, they cannot change the eternal nature and relations of things.

The world is dying with a lax morality. The glorious principle involved in the Saviour's remarkable words, "whosoever loseth his life shall save it," is not apprehended, nor practised. Men do not believe that "whosoever walketh uprightly walketh surely;" nor that "Godliness is profitable." They have swung loose from God, abandoned the principles of virtue, and are vainly endeavoring to work out the great problem of immortality upon the paltry maxims of expediency. We may tolerate opinions, but crime, never. Politicians speak of circumscribing slavery. But will you circumscribe murder? Will you say to a certain portion of our Republic, you may enjoy unmolested the privilege of highway robbery, or polygamy, or any other outrage upon national justice and common law, and you shall be protected by the General Government, provided you keep south of a certain line? The idea is absurd. You may circumscribe tariffs, banks, and other mere pecuniary interests, offsetting one interest against another. But you may not offset crime against crime, nor sell an indulgence to commit crime. To limit crime by law implies the permission of crime within that limit. I am satisfied that the whole theory of the limitation of slavery by law, is false in morals and delusive in its effects.

I am distressed to hear public men, men of intellect, position and power, say, "Let the slave States hold their own slaves—I care not for it; I have no wish to interfere with their rights, but they must not interfere with mine." Oh, let not the man be lost in the politician! It is not the generosity of the Saviour's golden rule. Is not slavery as deep a curse and as black a crime in one State or country as another? Is it not a crime against the race, and does not every man sustain a relation of responsibility to his race as well as his little State? Let not the great beating heart of humanity be dwarfed into a supreme regard to a

section of country. The obligations that one owes to his race are as much more grand and sacred than those which he owes to one section as a world is greater than a neighborhood, and as the rights of the human race are more inviolable than the selfish interests of a section. The right to liberty is above all laws and compacts. It is God's immutable will, written by his own finger upon the noblest of his works. No time-sanctioned human precedents, no sacredness of oaths, and no accumulation of self-interests, can change the Divine constitution of things, and nullify or suspend the rights of man.

5. Slavery ought to cease at once, and forever. This is the only rational end of anti-slavery action. By the highest law of the universe, the expressed will of the Eternal, it is immutably wrong. To continue it a moment, is to commit a crime against God and the human race. Nor is the crime of an ordinary character. In the long catalogue of human crimes this sustains a terrible supremacy. It is the most perfect concentration of human selfishness that is known in a selfish world. All other human crimes are but partial in their destruction. Ordinary theft is limited to property—murder is generally confined to one victim—even the gigantic crime of wars of conquest leave untouched the most sacred interests of society; but slavery leaves nothing to its victim but the hope of death. It takes property, family, body and mind. It exterminates all rights and all interests. Can an individual or nation be guiltless, and not repudiate such a crime? Oh, there is a cold heartlessness in this sentiment of letting slavery alone where it is, that is not to be thought of by a generous soul. The idea of giving peace to this country while a slave groans on our soil, contemplates the utter extinction of true virtue. Remember, virtue is an aggressive principle. It lives to act. When it ceases to act, it dies. Shall a man claim to be virtuous because he does not murder nor steal? Shall he, who quietly nestles down in the sanctuary of his own personal interests and gratifications, claim the attribute of fraternity, while he neglects the privations of the countless throngs of his fellow beings?

Where is the magnanimity, self-sacrifice, and devotion of real virtue? Where has been the pulpit and the sanctuary while eight hundred thousand of God's children have in vain lifted up their cry for help for generations past? The American pulpit ought to be in one universal blaze of excitement, and the church all on fire, when the Divine Saviour of the world is bought and sold, and whipped, in the person of his children. Peace to the country while slavery lives! Peace in such circumstances is treason against christianity.

With one more thought I close this subject.

I cannot contemplate the moral, social, and political condition of our race, but with a feeling of deep and intense commiseration. I ask, with a yearning heart, what can be done for its disenthralment? And I am deeply impressed with the conviction that the triumph of God's kingdom on earth is the only remedy. And I

am equally impressed with the belief that American slavery is the greatest present obstacle to that triumph. This will appear extravagant until you remember and appreciate the true mission and destiny of America. It seems apparent that upon America was conferred all the local and material resources, and the moral and religious bias necessary to qualify her to become the moral umpire of the world. Here, on the wild shores of a remote continent, the wearied sons and daughters of oppressed liberty and persecuted christianity, took refuge from the toils and conflicts of ages. Here they unfurled the banner of liberty and true christianity. They baptized the virgin soil with their blood, and consecrated it to the rights of man. Thus was plainly indicated the true destiny of this nation.

But for the intrusion of the alien and antagonistic principle of slavery, we might now have given law to the civilized world. Were we animated with benevolence and armed with justice, the distracted and oppressed nations of the earth would gladly look to us as the true example of freedom and the consistent defender of human rights. By their spontaneous consent, we might now have become the arbiter of the world's political destinies.

The proposition recently introduced into the American Senate, of declaring and maintaining a protectorate over Mexico and the States of Central America by the United States, was of so wide from our legitimate destiny.

I have no sympathy with the doctrine of non-intervention. It is too selfish to be manly. But in our present political degeneracy we are unfit for the protectorate of our own country. Millions of our own people need to-day the strong intervention of the civilized world. The proposition, therefore, is absurd, while a soundman groans on our soil.

But relieved from slavery, the only serious drawback upon our national prosperity, and the only cause of sectional conflict, the nation would be one in interest, one in spirit, and one in her peerless destiny. Under the spreading wings of her national influence and power, all lands and people, of whatever color or opinion, would find refuge and protection. From his exhaustless and increasing fountain of influence would issue the ever-widening streams of pure christianity. The smiles of God and the benedictions of a grateful race, together with all the internal and domestic felicities which result from virtue, would be our invaluable inheritance. Such is the legitimate destiny of our country, all defeated and blasted by slavery. Instead of this glorious spectacle, we present the most stupendous combination of gross national inconsistencies that can be found on earth. We are a nation before all others of intelligence, wealth, and natural resources of soil, climate, and race, and yet on the verge of hostile dissolution. Professing the most perfect national liberty, we practise the grossest despotism upon every seventh of our peo-

ple. Advocating principles one year, we trample upon them the next. Jealous of foreign infringement of the least right, we tear down, by a progressive series of conspiracies, one after another of the great pillars in the temple of our own freedom. By our gross oppressions at home, we bear false testimony against Christianity abroad. The banner of our national religion is the banner of unmitigated despotism. What influence can such conduct exert upon the political regeneration of other nations?

"What," says another, "can America dare to say to Italy, when the clank of the chain in the Italian dungeon is answered by the echoing shriek in the Southern slave plantation? What can America dare to say to Poland or Hungary, when the knout sounds the key-note of brutality, and the slave-whip takes up the infernal theme, and draws blood from the American-born as fiercely and as fiend-like?"

What rational people under a constitutional monarchy could desire a republic which enslaved every seventh of its inhabitants, and that lived in a state of endless civil conflict? What system of decent heathenism or natural religion is not preferable to a slave-holding Christianity?

You see that in attacking slavery first, we attack the nearest and greatest antagonist of the kingdom of God, and the greatest obstacle to the social improvement of our race. It is not merely, then, the ceaseless wail of four millions of our countrymen in chains that prompts to fidelity on this subject, but the spiritual thralldom of a self-destroyed race. I am impressed with the conviction that God has bestowed his last smile upon this country, until we let the oppressed go free. On this point he will maintain an unceasing controversy. He will suffer your own backslidings to punish you. The little cloud which hangs so dark and heavy over our western horizon may be dissipated without a general catastrophe—I doubt it. But if it is, the calm will be brief. Another cloud, with brighter flashes and heavier thunder, will soon appear. You will shortly recognise the Almighty riding upon the wings of the storm, and directing the chariots of his fierce wrath across your most cherished national interests. Then you will learn that there is a God in Israel. Then will He terribly vindicate His violated supremacy over this nation.

O! that this people would be wise! That they would hear God saying, your holiest religions are an abomination unto me while ye refuse to let my people go. "When ye make many prayers I will not hear you," except ye break every yoke, for "your hands are full of blood."

"Thus saith the Lord, execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it; because of the evil of your doings."